

Youth employment in the Hospitality sector

Youth unemployment is at an all-time high and falling slowly. Although the recession and subsequent lack of demand across the economy are the biggest factors, the fact is that youth unemployment has been rising since 2005. This suggests that the recession is only part of the cause.

There have been structural changes in the labour market that have made it increasingly difficult for young people to get into work, and move into good jobs which offer career progression:




- Word of mouth recruitment methods are on the rise – this disadvantages young people in particular, who haven't the necessary contacts or social capital
- Employers value experience above all else – yet only a quarter of them offer work experience
- The sales and elementary occupations that young people usually start out in are declining – and high skilled roles which young people find hard to access are on the rise.

These structural barriers exist to varying degrees across every sector. In general, however, most employers who recruit young people find them well prepared for work. 59% of employers who take on a 16 year old straight from school find them work ready, and this increases with level of education: 66% for 17-18 year old school leavers, 74% for 17-18 college leavers and 84% for graduates.



Jobs for young people

- Recruitment activity in the hospitality sector is above average: 64% of employers had vacancies, compared to an average in the UK of 48%.
- Hospitality employers top the table for recruiting young people. 84% of hospitality employers who have recruited in the past year have employed a young person. 45% had recruited a young person aged 16-18.
- Hospitality employers are some of the least likely to say that they had a vacancy that their young applicants weren't good enough to fill - only 5% of employers say this.
- Recruitment methods: 37% of hospitality employers utilised word of mouth recruitment methods, which disadvantage young people. The UK average is 29%.

Work experience

-  17% of hospitality employers offer work experience. This is well below the national average of 27%. Work experience is most common in the education sector, in which 63% of employers offer it.
-  Of those employers who don't offer work experience, 32% say this is because of a lack of suitable roles, while 28% say nobody approaches them about work experience.
-  Of those hospitality employers who do offer work experience, 41% recruited young people following their work placements. This is above the UK average of 38%.

Apprenticeships

-  14% of hospitality employers have or offer apprenticeships, very close to the UK average of 15%.
-  31% of hospitality employers plan to offer apprenticeships in the future. If these aspirations were realised, it would nearly double the number of employers involved.

Both apprenticeships and work experience placements are vital for young people and employers alike. Apprenticeships offer young people a gateway into a great career, and bring well documented returns in loyalty and productivity to employers. Work experience opens young people's eyes to jobs they have never thought of and helps instil the attitudes and behaviours expected at work, as well as feeding the talent pipeline for employers.

Continuing to invest in young people would ensure that the hospitality sector continues to play a key role in tackling the youth employment challenge whilst building an invaluable talent pipeline for the future.

Sources

Scaling the youth employment challenge
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